

## **Course syllabus for PhD course**

**Course part of the research school: People, Society and Sustainability  
Department of Economics/Department of Urban and Rural  
Development**

# **Environmental communication 2**

**Swedish title** Miljökommunikation 2

## **Higher education credits**

3 HEC

## **Subject**

Environmental Communication

## **Possible Additional subject/subjects (optional)**

Other social science

## **Course type**

Subject course

## **Language**

English

## **Prerequisites** (Subject(s) could be specified, but not masters level)

Accepted as a PhD student, prior participation in Course 1 is mandatory.

## **Objective** (formulated as learning goals)

In this course, environmental communication is understood as the joint construction of meaning through social negotiation of knowledge, values, emotions and embodied experiences related to environmental and sustainability issues. It is the second part of a set of two courses: Course 1 (4.5 credits; see separate syllabus) explores the diversity of approaches within the field of environmental communication, and situates environmental communication in relation to the wider environmental social sciences as well as to communication science. Course 2 (3 credits) builds on Part 1, engages with five key ideas in environmental communication and includes a writing task.

In short, these five key ideas include:

1. Understanding communication as multimodal and multilateral practices
2. Considering both the instrumental and constitutive aspects of communication
3. Considering environmental communication as an interplay between structure and agency
4. Understanding environmental communication as a field of discursive struggle and contestation, which requires an explicit engagement with disagreement and conflict as an integral part of communication

5. Taking account the role of power in knowledge production and communication processes, rather than viewing knowledge as neutral or objective.

Course participants are encouraged to unpack these key ideas, and explore and situate their own research in relation to these.

The overarching aim of the course is to:

- a. highlight diversity in environmental communication and related research and encourage critical reflection of the different approaches and perspectives
- b. facilitate discussion between researchers engaging with different aspects of environmental communication in their work
- c. support the participating PhD students in situating themselves in the spaces of inquiry delineated by these different approaches, and to reflect on their perspectives and contribution to academic and applied debates in environmental communication.

While the framing of the course refers to environmental communication, the exploration and critical discussion of the above-mentioned principles will also be of relevance to PhD candidates in related fields, such as environmental governance, rural development or landscape planning.

Upon completion of the course, the PhD students shall be able to:

- critically discuss aspects of their research in relation to the five ideas related to environmental communication covered in the course
- apply the concepts, theoretical standpoints and considerations covered in the course to their own and other scholars' research
- critically reflect on the contribution of their work to current academic debates in environmental communication and related research.

**Content** (Keep it general for future occasions)

The course will include 2 parts (6 weeks at 33%):

**1. *Key thoughts about environmental communication***

PhD students will engage with the five ideas underpinning our understanding of environmental communication (see above).

**2. *Writing assignment***

PhD students will write a 2000 word essay (which might later form the basis of a section in their PhD thesis) that situates their own research in the context of the 5 ideas explored in this course as well as the theories and perspectives covered in Course 1. Course teachers as well as fellow participants will provide feedback on the draft essays, and these comments can then be used to further improve the text.

The course includes workshops and other interactive sessions organised by the teachers, where appropriate together with participating PhD students.

Throughout the course, participants will discuss implications of their perspectives for their choice of methods, and the question what might make environmental communication different from other types of communication (e.g., health or science communication).

### **Examination**

To successfully complete the course, the PhD students will:

- Engage in the reading assignments and actively participate in the workshops and other exercises
- Draft and revise a reflective essay (approx. 2000 words)
- Comment on at least two other essays

If a student fails a test, the examiner may give the student a supplementary assignment, provided this is possible and there is reason to do so.

If a student has been granted targeted study support because of a disability, the examiner has the right to offer the student an adapted test, or provide an alternative form of assessment.

If this course is discontinued, SLU will decide on transitional provisions for the examination of students admitted under this syllabus who have not yet been awarded a Pass grade.

For the assessment an independent project (degree project), the examiner may also allow a student to add supplemental information after the deadline for submission. For more information, please refer to the Education Planning and Administration Handbook.

### **Contact for application and further information (One person only)**

Anke Fischer

### **Literature**

Required reading will be assigned to students four weeks before the course starts. The reading list will accompany the different parts of the course.

### **Additional Information**

This course is part of the research school People, Society and Sustainability, a joined research school between the Department of Economics and the Department of Urban and Rural Development.

Participating teachers:

- Lars Hallgren
- Klara Fischer
- Malte Rödl
- Sofie Joosse
- Anke Fischer

Time table:

- January: Part 1 – Reading assignments, five workshops on key ideas in environmental communication
- January to 11<sup>th</sup> February: Part 2 – Writing assignment (essay)
- 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> February: Part 2 – Commenting on at least 2 essays written by co-participants
- End of February: Part 2 – Discussion and reflection session

The course is given as part of the post-graduate research school 'People, Society and Sustainability' at the Department of Urban and Rural Development and the Department of Economics at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

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